Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

SOIL POLLUTION IN SERBIA: RISK TO HEALTH AND FOOD SECURITY

INCREASING NATIONAL CAPACITIES TO ASSESS THE RISK OF DIFFUSE AGRICULTURAL SOIL POLLUTION

FAO PROJECT: TCP/SRB/3803
Implementation period 2020-2022

ABOUT THE **PROJECT**

The aim of the project is to increase national capacities for diffuse soil pollution management and the proper use of remediation practices in fields under agricultural production in Serbia in order to protect the environment and promote sustainable agriculture production.

PROJECT **OBJECTIVES**

- Address the lack of national capacities to assess and manage diffuse agricultural soil pollution
- Address the lack of data on the usage of fertilizers and pesticides
- Assist Serbian authorities in identifying substances of very high concern and persistent organic pollutant chemicals
- Increase knowledge and awareness among farmers in the selected region to decrease the risk of diffuse soil pollution and improve pesticide and fertilizer management

MAIN **OUTPUTS**

- Research study on diffuse soil pollution in the selected region of Serbia, including on the status of the soil
- Training (and development of the training materials) for farmers and relevant stakeholders in the selected region to decrease the risk of diffuse soil pollution and improve pesticide and fertilizer management
- National technical network established among research centres and relevant stakeholders on environmental protection and primary soil remediation techniques

Soil pollution causes a chain reaction:

- alters soil biodiversity
- reduces soil organic matter and the capacity of soils to act as a filter
- contaminates groundwater
- causes an imbalance of soil nutrients

Among the most common soil pollutants are heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants, pesticides, fertilizers and emerging pollutants, such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products.

Soil pollution is devastating to the environment and has consequences for all forms of life on earth:

- Unsustainable agricultural practices that reduce soil organic matter can facilitate the transfer of pollutants into the food chain.
- Beyond the impact on the environment, soil pollution also has high economic costs due to reductions in crop yields and quality.

Because the vast majority of pollutants are a result of human action, we are directly responsible for making the necessary changes to ensure a less polluted, more secure future.

Healthy soils are the key to food security and our sustainable future.

PROJECT **CONTRIBUTION**

- Helping build a healthy and safe environment and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Assisting in meeting the priorities of the Government of Serbia by building resilience to natural disasters and climate change and improving the sustainable management of natural resources
- Strengthening the capacities of national staff and enabling knowledge transfer to farmers

FAO believes that focusing on soil pollution is critical to the success of **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030)**, the **post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**, the **One Health approach** and SDGs.

CONTACT

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https://www.fao.org/europe/regional-initiatives/natural-resources/en/

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